

Media Update-2

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PRESS RELEASE

FAO introduces Walk-in Tunnels for off-season vegetable production in Tribal Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Peshawar– The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has introduced tunnel-farming in the tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with support from USAID as part of its efforts to promote effective-modern ways of agricultural production in the wide-range climate of the region. Seventy-five walk-in tunnels are installed in Khyber, South Waziristan, North Waziristan and Orakzai District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The activities were initiated before the onset of COVID-19, and as such provided a welcome and timely relief to local farmers who can now enjoy the harvest at a time when their lives and livelihoods are disrupted due to the lockdown.

These farmers were provided walk-in tunnel structures and high quality certified vegetable seeds that were cultivated and are now ready to be harvested. This activity is part of a restoring subsistence and promoting modern commercial agriculture program in the tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which aims to promote sustainable agriculture enterprise development by establishing market structures and services, developing value chains, expanding markets, and building capacity of both men and women farmers.

Before the onset of COVID-19, FAO steered extensive off and on-job trainings for the farmers and arranged external exposure visits to introduce them to tunnel farming. The familiarization with modern technology targets capacity-building and increased profitability from agricultural activities.

Now during the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown, producing and harvesting vegetables under tunnels will enable farmers to have enough agri produce for a diversified diet for self-consumption as well as for selling in their neighborhoods and local markets. FAO is also supporting these tunnel farmers in developing linkages with local and national markets.

“The poorest and most vulnerable groups have higher likelihood to experience higher negative effects of the current pandemic and related lock down. This includes subsistence farmers as well as smallholder farmers’ enterprises. Modernization of Agriculture practices and digital technology to provide real-time information to farmers on prices or to support the supply chain can be effective resilience and mitigation measures in time of shocks such as COVID19,” said Minà Dowlatchahi, FAO Representative in Pakistan.

FAO will continue to support farmers with modernization and agro-technology in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Merged Districts to boost higher value production, food security and agro-livelihood opportunities. Walk-in tunnels help increase productivity – reducing the yield gaps and also help achieve sustainable increases of agro-food through improved agriculture practices.

For media inquiries please contact Mehr Hassan, FAO Pakistan at mehr.hassan@fao.org or Seema Ghazi, FAO Pakistan at seema.ghazi@fao.org
